

INTRODUCTION

HOW TO MILK THIS TOOLKIT FOR ALL IT'S WORTH!





THE RETAILER OUTREACH TOOLKIT

As retailers, you play a vital role in the delivery of the FSP's most important commodity – food. Your role in the community is key to improving the health of those experiencing hunger and food insecurity. This toolkit offers the opportunity to maximize this role by promoting the FSP to those who are eligible but not participating.

What can retailers do?

This toolkit includes information on:

- The FSP and how it helps families in need
- Outreach efforts through partnerships
- Resources and further instructions on what you can do to promote program participation
- How you can help educate your customers to the nutrition benefits of the FSP

Each section features easy-to-follow instructions, helpful hints, and useful materials that you can customize and enhance with information about your store's outreach efforts.

How do I use the toolkit?

The materials in this toolkit illustrate a number of outreach possibilities and offer your organization the flexibility to evaluate and select those pieces that work for your specific needs. Throughout the toolkit, there are tip sheets that you can duplicate for yourself and your colleagues. Although you may have limited resources and staff, you can still use the toolkit. You do not have to conduct every one of these activities or invest a lot of time in each one. Do what works best for you and your community.

What other partners are involved in food stamp outreach?

Food stamp outreach is a community-wide effort enlisting the help of State and local food stamp offices, faith and community-based groups, retailers, food banks, and others. Together, these groups play an important role in helping low income families learn about and access the FSP. Community groups can help in many ways. For example, they can distribute informational materials, conduct prescreening for program eligibility, provide application assistance, and help gather verification documents. Retailers generally undertake activities to educate their customers and offer the facilities for outreach events.

To help empower these entities to improve food stamp outreach by providing a forum to link and share information about their efforts, the Food Stamp Outreach Coalition was developed in 2003. This core group collaborates to promote the nutrition benefits of the FSP through various outreach initiatives. The coalition meets twice a year in person and is also accessible via the FNS web site at: www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/about.htm. Anyone is welcome to join the coalition.



Many retailers find that by nurturing community bonds through conducting food stamp outreach, they also increase customer loyalty and overall sales.

